



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

Steven C. Horn, Division Director
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Amanda Whitmore, Historic Preservation Planner
DATE: September 20, 2021
RE: Peace & Plenty District Administrative Approval Area

Issue:

Does the Commission agree to establish an administrative approval area on the active farmsteads in the Peace & Plenty Rural Historic District?

Background and Discussion:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at the December 2020 regular meeting recommended the Peace & Plenty Rural Historic District for designation. The district is comprised of 10 properties spread over 1,100 acres northeast of New Market. Currently, design guidelines specific to the district are being developed to address the design issues particularly present within the district. The district will move forward in the designation process once the property owners have had an opportunity to review and comment on the draft guidelines.

A subcommittee consisting of two HPC members, three district property owners, and county staff are working with a consultant to develop the guidelines. As with the recently approved countywide design guidelines, the HPC will receive a draft of the guidelines for review and comment. However, the subcommittee has developed a proposal for the Peace & Plenty Rural Historic District that needs to be brought forward to the entire HPC for their comments and hopeful support.

The district has six working farms that are actively producing agricultural products. As these farms continue, they will need to adapt to expanding and changing farming operations, which could require the expansion of the farmstead. In order to streamline the review process and continue to encourage customary farming operations at these properties, it has been proposed that an area near the historic farmsteads be designated for new agricultural structures. These structures would be eligible for an administrative review.

During subcommittee discussions, it was shared that the Frederick County Soils Conservation District frequently supports farmers in constructing new agricultural buildings. In such cases, they identify the best building site based on a variety of factors, including availability of power and water and impacts to soils, water, productive land, and other environmental considerations. Because Federal money is involved, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) as part of the Section

106 review process reviews the project for any archeological or architectural impacts to the historic property. Staff has contacted both the Soils Conservation District and MHT regarding this review process. Both agencies have indicated that very rarely is a historic resource adversely impacted by the project. When there is an adverse impact, the project is evaluated for alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impact to the historic resource.

New agricultural structures are required in order to meet new operational needs when the existing structures on the farm are not sufficient to meet current requirements. Typically, the new buildings are located near the existing farmstead since these areas already have electricity and water available and are located on some of the least productive farmland. It is proposed that an area near the historic farmstead could be designated for new agricultural buildings with only administrative staff level approval required in order to expedite the review process.

In order to meet the administrative approval, Staff proposes the following requirements for new buildings:

1. Must be located within the identified build area;
2. Must have an agricultural purpose;
3. Must not substantially obstruct the primary views of the historic farmstead;
4. Must not have a physical, adverse impact to a historic resource;
5. Must be similar in mass, height, and scale to existing structures unless contemporary agricultural equipment or practices have specific requirements where this cannot be met; and
6. Must utilize materials that complement the property.

If the proposed building does not meet the above criteria and there is no information provided as to why the building cannot meet the criteria, the Historic Preservation Commission will review the proposed building. Additional information would be required when a proposed building cannot meet the criteria due to requirements of the Soils Conservation District, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, or other similar conservation or agricultural organizations. In addition, this area would follow Section 13.4 Guidelines and Section 13.5 Procedures in the Historic Preservation Commission's Rules of Procedure regarding Administrative Staff Level approvals.

The process before the HPC for identifying and approving the area is proposed as follows:

1. Property owner provides input on the preferred location and marks the area on an aerial or site map.
2. Staff reviews the preferred location and forwards a recommendation to the HPC for review and approval.
3. A map or aerial with the approved location will be maintained in the district file.
4. If a modification to the approved area is needed, the approval process will follow steps 1-3 showing the modified area.

If the Commission is favorable to this proposal, Staff will begin to work with the property owners within the district to identify their preferred areas. The administrative approval process for this area as recommended by the Commission will be included within the design guidelines for the Peace & Plenty Rural Historic District. Following designation of the district on the County Register, the Historic Preservation Commission's Rules of Procedure, Exhibit 1 will be updated to include the Peace & Plenty build area.